

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2016
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM – 7 P.M.
MINUTES**

Present were Members: Chair John R. Hine, Vice Chair Sarah Etelman, Clerk Bruce C. Forcier, Ira J. Brezinsky and Francis J. DeToma; Town Administrator Michael J. Sullivan.

At 7 p.m., Chair Hine called the meeting to order, noting that all members were present.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

SB Member DeToma moved to approve the regular Selectboard minutes of October 6, 2016 and October 18, 2016. SB Member Brezinsky seconded. The motion passed unanimously 5:0.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Early voting has been going extremely well, Mr. Sullivan reported. It has ended for today, but registered voters can cast votes tomorrow (November 2nd) from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and daily through November 4, 2016. He gave the schedule for the remainder of the two-week period. At day's end today, just under 2,300 votes had been cast, he shared. On November 8th, all voting will be at the high school. Administrators have been doing a post-mortem of the voting process to determine what went well and what didn't, since, in two years, it will become mandated, he noted. He offered thanks and commendation to Town Clerk Carlene Hamlin.

SB Member Etelman announced that any resident needing a ride to the polls can e-mail her at setelman@southhadley.ma.gov or call (413) 470-0715 and she will put them in touch with someone who can give them a ride.

Fall yard waste collection has started and will continue thru November 21st, Ms. Etelman related. As in the past, yard waste is accepted in open containers or paper bags only and must be at the curb by 7 a.m. on the route's regular collection day.

The South Hadley Falls Neighborhood Association (SHFNA) is having its monthly meeting this Saturday at 10 a.m. at the public library, SB Member Brezinsky reminded. And, the South Hadley/Granby Chamber of Commerce will be having a spotlight on South Hadley business at the high school Thursday night at 7 p.m. in conjunction with Know Your Town. Quite a few and very diverse types of businesses will be present to talk about what they do, he elaborated. The chamber is also hosting a legislative Checkpoint with Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito at the Log Cabin in Holyoke on November 10, 2016.

Mr. Brezinsky informed members that he attended the MA Selectboard Association fall conference at Holy Cross this Saturday and copied materials for everyone. House Speaker Robert DeLeo spoke and the breakout sessions were quite good, including "Mastering the Art of Town Communication."

The South Hadley Lion's Club is offering a spaghetti dinner the first Monday of every month, including this Monday, November 7th, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Roost, SB Member DeToma reminded. This month members are honoring their friends at the Holyoke Soldiers Home as invited guests.

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair Hine asked if anyone wished to address the Selectboard under open forum. No one responded. He recognized Assistant Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz to introduce new town employees.

Human Resources is busy, which is good because people want to work for the Town of South Hadley, Mrs. Wolowicz said. Everyone she is introducing tonight has worked in other communities in the same type of work and, for one reason or another, thinks they might be happier working in South Hadley. She introduced part-time local building inspector Joseph Latronica, dispatcher Joanna Levesque and Activity/Volunteer Coordinator Nancy Yesu. Mr. Latronica comes with many years of experience most recently in Swampscott with prior stints in Wayland, Somerville, Newton and Brookline. He holds the distinction of being among the first group of inspectors to take the exam to become a certified building commissioner in 1992. He lives in Ashfield, has worked as an interim inspector in communities that have lost inspectors and has also sat on panels to hire other building commissioners. He has also served on zoning and zoning study boards.

Joanna Levesque comes from the Ludlow Police Department and has a military background in the U.S. Air Force. She works the night shift from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Nancy Yesu has experience with the East Longmeadow Council on Aging and has also worked at the First Church of Christ and MacDuffie School. Members offered greetings and welcomed the new hires.

4. APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO SOUTH HADLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY (SHPL) BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Richard S. Matteson of 7 Victoria Lane thanked the Selectboard for meeting with him tonight, mentioning that he is unable to attend the joint meeting on the 15th due to his role as music director for the Black Cat Theater's production of Oliver, which opens Thursday, November 17th at South Hadley High School.

Chair Hine stressed that this is a joint appointment. Two representatives of the SHPL trustees were present; David Morrell and Mitch Resnick.

Mr. Matteson told those present that he actually ran for a seat on the trustee board in April in his first venture into town politics. There were three slots and he was up against three incumbents. The incumbents won, but he got 550 votes, which is a lot considering that he didn't actively campaign. He has been in town almost 11 years, served six years on the Cultural Council and was appointed to the Council on Aging in June. He loves the libraries and thinks they are a phenomenal resource in town and hears really good things about the library trustees. Having served on numerous boards in the Hartford, CT area, he loves being involved in groups that work well together. Both libraries are wonderful sources of resources and community gathering, and he would like to do anything he can do to help out. Regardless of whether he is appointed or not, he will run in April, having had the experience of running already.

SB Member Etelman asked if he had been following the integration process and he said that he had. Mr. Resnick invited him to attend the trustees meeting this Monday.

SB Member Brezinsky said he thought Mr. Matteson has been a great addition to the community in the time he's been here. He gave a plug to the Black Cat Theater production.

The idea of youngsters going into a building that offers incredible services represents the best of the community for young people, SB Member DeToma commented. Libraries are "a wonderful introduction to the best of a community," he remarked.

The Selectboard and SHPL trustees will take action on November 15th, Chair Hine confirmed.

5. CULTURAL COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Three people have expressed interest in filling two seats on the Cultural Council, Chair Hine advised.

SB Member Brezinsky said he would abstain from asking any questions or voting because of his association with an organization that has received funds and has an application before the Cultural Council for the coming year.

Rebecca Slitt of 144 Riverboat Village Road said she moved to South Hadley just over three years ago. One of the reasons she chose to live in the Pioneer Valley is because it is such a great place to be a creative person; full of musicians, artists, etc. She has been singing with the South Hadley Chorale since she's been here and loves that it has loyal members going back thru the years. She has been on the board of the South Hadley Chorale and has been looking for other ways of giving back to the community. A fellow member suggested that she apply for the Cultural Council.

SB Member Etelman commented that, traditionally, the main responsibility of the council has been giving out grants. She asked what else Ms. Slitt might like to see the Cultural Council do.

Ms. Slitt acknowledged the power of grant-making but said she thought it would be great for Cultural Council members to be more proactive if possible. She suggested having dedicated funds for more specific types of art to help emerging art forms get off the ground. In her professional life; she works with a lot of digital art. For [less established] art forms like that it can make a huge difference, she pointed out.

Rita Starzyk of 7 Ivy Lane described herself as a volunteer. She has been volunteering for a very long time at many different places and is presently involved in many other volunteer activities, she related. She was a bookkeeper for the South Hadley Chorale for 12 years. She likes libraries and schools. Marion Canning also asked her to apply.

Chair Hine asked if she had attended any meetings yet, and she said she had not. Mrs. Canning told her the council had given \$8,900 to 29 organizations last year, she volunteered.

Knowing the primary function of the Cultural Council, SB Member Etelman asked if there is anything else she thinks the Cultural Council should be doing.

Mrs. Starzyk said she didn't know enough about it; she didn't even know who it gave money to in the past.

SB Member DeToma asked why the Cultural Council.

She knows Marion from the South Hadley Chorale and was told that the group had difficulty getting a quorum for an upcoming meeting because of the number of vacancies.

But why the particular interest in this organization, he persisted. She responded that, to her, it is another place to volunteer. She has been very happy with other organizations she volunteers with. She also serves as a proofreader for Loomis Village.

Paul Lambert of 49 Ashton Lane said that, as Vice President of the Basketball Hall of Fame, he is in charge of events and programming for the museum. He has been lucky enough to be involved in the South Hadley Chorale, which is a joy because it is tied to his earlier life before basketball. He has not done anything here in South Hadley and he and his wife and sons have lived here since 2002. It would be a wonderful thing if he could assist somewhere, he asserted.

Chair Hine asked if saw any similarity between what he does for the Basketball Hall of Fame and the duties of the Cultural Council.

He worked in professional theater before basketball and for the NBA before that, an organization that combines art with sports. The Basketball Hall of Fame has played a critical part in driving the economic engine in Springfield and also driving the beautiful game of basketball, he observed.

SB Member Etelman asked if there is anything more he would like to see the Cultural Council doing. He would want to learn much more, Mr. Lambert responded. He has been lucky to have learned from other boards he has served, such as in public radio. He would like to bring more arts into South Hadley, he confirmed.

Mr. Sullivan encouraged anyone not appointed tonight to contact him or the chair to discuss other volunteer opportunities. He mentioned the Master Plan Implementation Committee as a board seeking members. Chair Hine agreed that having more people than spots is one of the toughest positions he finds himself in. They are always looking for people who want to help and have lots of committees. He strongly encouraged the person not appointed to look for other opportunities to volunteer.

Chair Hine opened the floor to nominations for the seat with term ending June 30, 2019.

SB Member Etelman nominated Rebecca Slitt. SB Member DeToma nominated Rita Starzyk.

Chair Hine called the nomination of Slitt to a vote, and the motion received three aye votes. (SB Member Brezinsky abstained.) He called the nomination of Starzyk to a vote and she received one aye vote (SB Member DeToma). He announced that the nomination of Rebecca Slitt carried by a vote of 3:1.

Chair Hine opened the floor to nominations for the seat with term ending June 30, 2017. **SB Member Etelman nominated Paul Lambert. SB Member DeToma nominated Rita Starzyk. There was a 2:2 tie, with two members in favor of Mrs. Starzyk (SB Members Forcier and DeToma) and two in favor of Mr. Lambert (SB Member Etelman and Chair Hine).**

Paul Lambert withdrew his name from consideration, resulting in the appointment of Rita Starzyk.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

A. **One Day Beer and Wine License Requests:**

- **Imad Zubi, Willits-Hallowell Center – November 11, 2016 – MHC Art Museum Lobby**

SB Member DeToma moved to approve the consent agenda. SB Member Etelman seconded. The motion carried 5:0.

7. FY 2017 BUDGET QUARTERLY REVIEW

Mr. Sullivan reviewed a letter and spreadsheet from Town Accountant William Sutton listing departments/budgets that have exceeded 25% of their appropriation as of the end of the first quarter (September 30, 2016). The report cites nothing significant at this time from an expenditure standpoint; rather, some of the budget items shown as being 100% expended are due to timing issues, he explained. Revenues are tracking above projections for the Building Department again this year. Some things are reflective of efforts the Selectboard has made; i.e. - staffing decisions. In looking at the list of items exceeding 25%, it can be seen that some are dues related; others are just slightly above. Veterans Services is trending slightly above the budgeted amount. There isn't anything he would say is out of the ordinary, he concluded.

Mr. DeToma commented that the report is about the same as what members have seen in previous years, and Mr. Sullivan agreed.

8. FY 2018 BUDGET PARAMETERS

The town received good news about Free Cash certification, but he would suggest that it should have little to do with budget development since it represents a one-time surplus rather than recurring revenue and so should not be put toward recurring expenses, Mr. Sullivan said. In directions to department heads, he is asking them to update their capital requests and cap personnel at the level funded last year. Any additional personnel requested would go through a review process. Every department has ideas about programs and how additional staff would make a difference, but it is incumbent on them to present a balanced budget and avoid a debt exclusion, he suggested.

He cited voting as a great example – the Town Clerk is doing a great job at managing and insuring that early voting is a smooth process. In that regard, everyone in Town Hall has played a hand in showing people where to vote, making sure signs are up, etc. One employee has come in on vacation to help, and it has been a team effort. This as an example of the kind of flexibility and team-building the town needs. When a department has a big activity like this, we need to shift assets and resources, he stressed. This is just one example, but there are examples every day of utilizing existing staff to meet needs, such as Administrative Secretary Laura Krutzler covering in the Clerk's office. He expressed the opinion that this is the future of municipal government

Mr. DeToma said he was concerned about possible confusion on the part of the viewing audience since they just introduced three new hires.

Mr. Sullivan readily explained that Nancy Yesu replaced an employee who retired in May; Joanna Levesque was a replacement for a position that had gone unfilled for some time, and Mr. Latronica replaces David Gardner, who took a full-time job in Chicopee. He had a meeting today about the serious situation involving a vacuum of people meeting state building inspector standards and so was elated to find somebody so talented and qualified. He offered hats off to the Human Resource and Building Departments.

Chair Hine offered thanks to employees who are taking on shifting responsibilities to help out in different areas. He agreed with Mr. Sullivan's assessment that the town does not have the resources to increase staff.

Mr. Sullivan also credited the considerable investment in platforms to make jobs easier with helping to maintain reduced staffing levels. He mentioned Viewpermit, Harper's Payroll, etc. He appreciates that the town has taken a great stance in funding these platforms and this technology and hopes it is recognized by the public as an effort to make information more available to them. He referred to General Code revisions to the town bylaw, noting that he has encouraged the Bylaw Review Committee to go to the website and look at the final draft. There are no changes so dramatic that he needs to outline them tonight, he said.

9. LEDGES UPDATE

Staff has been working hard and has really changed the image of the course in the eyes of the golfing public, General Manager Andy Rogers reported. This is what they wanted to do most and he thinks they have been successful. He cited an increase in tournaments/outings, leagues and annual pass holders and the fact that play is up by a couple hundred rounds as additional signs of progress.

The restaurant is a different challenge, he acknowledged. Valley View has had good food and business has been excellent with tournaments, but operators could certainly improve in marketing to the general public and getting more people to eat there. With a late start, this really wasn't the focus.

As far as the course, workers fixed some drainage and the course is in good shape. Summer did do a number on the pump. There were some burnouts on the fairways, but they have bounced back and fall has been good for growing.

The restaurant will close November 15th. The course is totally booked tomorrow, and they are going to keep the course open as long as possible. In the past, the course typically closed the Monday of Thanksgiving week. He would like to stay open until December if there is no snow. He has set a "drop dead" date of December 20th.

Although they are staying open later, they made the decision not to assess any additional fees to annual pass holders, Mr. Sullivan interjected. They might reserve the right to do so next year but thought it would not be right to take pass holders by surprise.

Chair Hine expressed his understanding that operators typically closed earlier because of concern for the condition of the course.

The more play on the course, the greater the wear and tear, Mr. Rogers acknowledged. However, there are things staff can do to preserve the course given certain weather conditions. They want to make as much money as possible. In a perfect world, the maintenance crew would like them to close as soon as they can so they can begin winter preparation.

By staying open later, what you probably have out there are more serious, addicted golfers who probably have more respect for the course and probably inflict less damage than the average golfer, SB Member Forcier volunteered.

Last winter when he took over he was shocked by the cost of electricity, Mr. Rogers continued. They have talked about winterizing the building and draining pipes. They are definitely looking to turn off everything they can the second they can. The electric bill was between 5 and \$6,000 in the winter months last year. He wants to do everything he can to reduce that; basically closing the building.

Ms. Etelman expressed her understanding that, although they tried last year to hold events to bring in revenue, they discovered that it didn't bring in enough revenue to make it worthwhile. Mr. Rogers confirmed that is trying to lock the place up for the winter.

Mr. Brezinsky commented that the town has a history of delivering two messages. The verbal message is "come on up, use the course; go snowshoeing, go hiking," but the message from signage is "No Trespassing," "Stay out," etc. He asked if this could be looked into.

The big concern in talking to maintenance is keeping people off the tee boxes, Mr. Rogers responded. He is in recreation so he loves to see people out there doing all sorts of things.

Most of the damage caused over the winter is from snowmobilers who have no business being on the course, Mr. Forcier pointed out.

The restaurant part of the course has been problematic for a number of years, SB Member DeToma observed. He asked what lessons Mr. Rogers had learned this year that he could apply to next year.

This year was particularly challenging because of the late start and difficulty finding cooks, Mr. Rogers said. Finding the right balance on pricing is also key. Last year they charged \$11 or \$12 a burger and they dropped it to \$7. He really didn't concentrate on marketing the restaurant this year. "I definitely think we could do a better job of that," he acknowledged.

He and Mr. Sullivan have discussed running it the way it is now or going back to the concessionaire model.

The School Superintendent has expressed his interest in getting his culinary arts program associated with the Ledges, SB Member DeToma said. Mr. Sullivan said he has talked to Dr. Young about this on a few occasions.

The restaurant is really hard, Mr. Rogers confirmed. He commended his staff, noting that they haven't had complaints. There's been no negativity with the restaurant, he assured.

Mr. Sullivan offered his compliments to Andy for turning the Ledges into a place where people feel welcomed. He has done an excellent job with customer service, he confirmed. The town has offered both school food service employees and Mount Holyoke College (MHC) commissary workers the opportunity to work for Valley View if they are not working in the summer. Finding workers is going to be even more difficult next year with competition from the casinos. He voiced his expectation that the price point is going to increase.

With respect to using school food service personnel, SB Member Brezinsky suggested looking at personnel from other communities. Mr. Rogers said he did try to recruit from that source.

As far as the pro shop, he concentrated on hats, shirts and golf balls. He found that Giants, Patriots and Red Sox gear flies off the shelf. Sales are up \$500 over last year, and the margins are pretty good on those products. He also brought in Nike products.

In response to a question about patronage by South Hadley residents, Mr. Rogers said he'd have to do some tracking, but it seems like he sees a lot of South Hadley residents there. This has been a criticism of some in the past, so it would be good to do a little research on it, Mr. Brezinsky proposed.

They have really expanded tournaments. The USO tournament was 130 players. The UMass softball tournament was held on a Sunday that poured, and what would have been a zero dollar day turned into a \$5,000 day. He thinks this is something the golf pro did well with and he wanted to commend Jim Falco for that. The Connecticut Section PGA wants to come back next year, and the Massachusetts Golf Association is set to host an event. They are also looking to host MA Four Ball. They are running a turkey shoot-out on Veterans Day with an 11 o'clock shotgun. He would like to offer some competitive golf to the general public in some slots.

SB Member Forcier complimented Mr. Rogers on the thorough update, adding that the course is expanding the junior golf program. It is a top-down, service-oriented group there now, and he thinks good things are ahead, he shared. Chair Hine agreed that he heard multiple positive comments over the summer. SB Member Brezinsky also commended Mr. Rogers on his report.

10. RATES

Mr. Rogers presented proposed rates for the 2017 season. One thing they did not want to do is go up across the board. Among other things, they wanted to go to \$30 with a cart for a promotional rate. The other objective was to simplify rates to make it easier for staff to explain. Weekend play is typically booked from 7 a.m to 2 p.m. Sunday afternoon around 2 or 3 o'clock is a ghost town. Weekend mornings are packed. He wants to go from \$42 for residents and \$47 for non-residents to \$45 and \$50, respectively. He also wants to make military members, students and seniors the same rate.

Junior golf went to \$15, and he did not touch the nine-hole rates. During the week, rates are presently \$37 for residents and \$42 for non-residents, with senior residents at \$31 and senior non-residents at \$33, and there was no change there. He ran a \$5 off aeration special the week the maintenance crew aerated the greens.

Golf Commission members approved the proposed rate structure, he advised.

SB Member Brezinsky commended Mr. Rogers for his thoughtfulness in setting the rates. He asked if he had done any financial modeling to see what the change does to revenue projections. Mr. Rogers said he did some for the Golf Commission meeting.

The more modeling you can do; the better, SB Member Brezinsky suggested. He said he thought it would be helpful.

Having sat in on Golf Commission meetings, SB Member Forcier confirmed that a lot of thought went into these rates. Mr. Rogers did modeling based on the annual pass increase, he said. **SB Member Forcier moved to accept the rates for regular play (daily fee play) as presented. SB Member Etelman seconded. The motion passed unanimously 5:0.**

SB Member Forcier moved to accept the annual pass rate structure as presented. SB Member Etelman seconded. It places emphasis on attracting juniors and young professionals, Mr. Forcier commented. **The motion passed unanimously 5:0.**

11. SELECTBOARD IN THE COMMUNITY

A couple of people who attended the Selectboard in the community events before come in and asked if they were going to be doing them again, Mr. Sullivan said. He made the suggestion to the vice chair of having a quarterly meeting. SB Member Etelman offered to send out a doodle invitation to poll members as to their availability, and they agreed.

12. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

SB Member DeToma asked Mr. Sullivan to say a little more about the abandoned building program.

Inspectional services was working with Julie Datres for a number of years. She has been promoted in the Attorney General's office so they are now working with Attorney Kara Cunha. They have taken immediate action on a couple of properties and done tax title taking on others. Someone redeemed one property after tax title taking. A person redeeming is required to refund the town all legal fees and pay property taxes for a year in advance. Another property is beyond the redemption period (16 Ludlow), and town officials are currently going through the eviction process. The owners have left but there is someone remaining in the building. The town also took action against 5-7 Ingram Street today, a building that has been vacant for some time.

In related news, the Attorney General (AG) approved an article under which, beginning this year, owners will be required to register vacant buildings. The AG included commercial properties. The bylaw gives the town the ability to enter the building once a year for an inspection. The first year the owner would pay \$100 for the inspection with half going to the district, and the fee will increase to \$300 after three years. The town does not have to take the step of increasing the fee, he clarified. Under Attorney Cunha's guidance, the town is back into the receivership program, with 5-7 Ingram to be the first property in receivership.

Joanna L. Brown of 25 Charon Terrace asked if the measure is aimed specifically at properties that have been abandoned or neglected.

Yes, they have to be vacant for a period of six months to qualify for the program, Mr. Sullivan said. If they are being maintained and property taxes are being paid the town will still inspect it on an annual basis, he confirmed.

Ms. Brown asked how the properties are identified, and Mr. Sullivan said it is usually by the neighbors. The bylaw was passed at the last Town Meeting, he advised.

Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
LAURA KRUTZLER, ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

EXHIBIT A

List of Documents Reviewed at November 1, 2016 Selectboard Meeting:

1. November 1, 2016 Agenda.
2. Minutes of October 6, 2016 regular Selectboard meeting.
3. Minutes of October 18, 2016 regular Selectboard meeting.
4. One Day Beer and Wine License Application from Imad Zubi for Willits-Hallowell Center at Mount Holyoke College for a reception on Friday, November 11, 2016 from 5 to 8:30 p.m. in the MHC Art Museum Lobby.
5. Memo from Town Accountant William Sutton to the Selectboard and Appropriations Committee dated October 25, 2016 re: Statement of Expenditures vs. Appropriations printout for first quarter of FY 2017 (July 1, 2016 to September 30, 2016).
6. List of Departments Exceeding 25.0% of Budget (Listing as of 9/30/16).
7. Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Guidelines from Mike Sullivan, South Hadley Town Administrator.
8. Application for Appointment to Board, Commission or Committee (South Hadley Public Library Board of Trustees) from Richard Matteson.
9. Letter of Interest in Appointment to Cultural Council from Rebecca Slitt.
10. Narrative Report of Ledges Activity from General Manager Andy Rogers dated October 27, 2016.
11. Memo from GM Andy Rogers to South Hadley Selectboard dated October 27, 2016 re: 2017 Annual Pass Rate Proposal.
12. Chart Entitled, "2017 Ledges Golf Club – Proposed Annual Pass Rate Structure."
13. Memo from GM Andy Rogers to South Hadley Selectboard dated October 27, 2016 re: Daily Rates 2017.
14. Chart of 2017 Proposed Daily Rates.
15. Town Administrator Report dated October 28, 2016.